

A NEW WEEVIL ATTACKING PINE-APPLES IN JAMAICA.

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Mr. A. H. Ritchie, Government Entomologist of Jamaica, has recently sent home specimens of a large black weevil which he has found doing serious damage to pine-apples in that island. The insect proves to be a new species of *Metamasius*, of the sub-family CALANDRINAE, and I have much pleasure in naming it after its discoverer.

***Metamasius ritchiei*, sp. nov. (fig. 1).**

Colour uniformly black, without any scaling, hairs or bloom; the prothorax rather shiny, the elytra duller, the metasternum and the middle of the venter very shiny.

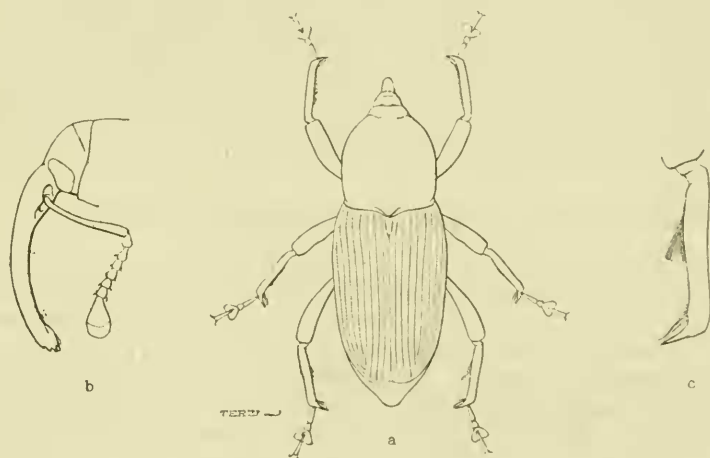


Fig. 1. *Metamasius ritchiei*. Mshl., sp. n., ♂; a, dorsal view; b, side view of head; c, hind tibia.

♂.—*Head* shiny, with very small scattered punctures, its outline not continuous with that of the rostrum (fig. 1, b); the distance between the eyes above slightly greater than usual, the space between them beneath with a very shallow triangular impression. *Rostrum* stout, strongly curved, longer (across the curve) than the front femur and shorter than the prothorax, thickened at the base, then very gradually narrowing to near the apex and widening again slightly; the whole surface rather shiny and with small scattered punctures throughout, a small round fovea in the middle of the extreme base and a short faint central stria between the antennae; the mentum convex and rather prominent, so that the rostrum is markedly deeper at the apex. *Antennae* with the funicle nearly as long as the scape, the two basal joints equal, 4 to 6 subequal and about as long as broad; the bare triangular portion of the club (as seen from the broad side) with its lateral edge longer than the apical, which is rounded, the pubescent terminal portion almost semicircular. *Prothorax*

a little longer than broad (7 : 6), the sides almost parallel from the base to the middle, thence narrowing in a curve and with a well-marked subapical constriction, the basal margin with a rather pronounced median lobe, bordered by a distinct carina which is not continued beyond the lobe; the upper surface quite flat with very minute scattered punctures, except along a narrow central line in the basal half, and a few coarser punctures at the extreme apex of the basal lobe. *Scutellum* lancet-shaped, impunctate, deeply hollowed at the base to receive the prothoracic lobe. *Elytra* much longer than the prothorax (12 : 7), broadest at the shoulders and very gradually narrowed behind, striae 1 to 6 narrow and impunctate, wider and deeper at the base, the outer striae with rows of small shallow punctures becoming finer and shallower at the base, the intervals almost flat, with minute irregular punctures. *Sternum*: the prosternum coarsely punctate, except the space between and behind the coxae, which is impunctate, the punctures diminishing towards the sides; the inter-coxal piece of the mesosternum impunctate, the remainder and the side-pieces with shallow separated punctures; the metasternum very shiny and with very minute scattered punctures, the side-pieces more opaque. *Venter* in the middle similar to the metasternum, but with the punctures a trifle more evident and becoming much stronger towards the sides, the last segment with a shallow depression at the apex containing coarse confluent punctures. *Legs* with fine scattered punctation; coxae with a small tuft of reddish hairs; the femora with a few minute hairs on the lower surface; the tibiae with two carinae on the lower edge each bearing a fringe of hairs, those on the mid tibiae short, on the front pair longer, on the hind pair short with a conspicuous tuft of long hairs in the middle (fig. 1, c).

♀ unknown.

Length (excluding rostrum), 19·5–20·5 mm.; *breadth*, 7–7·5 mm.

JAMAICA: Above Rocks District (*A. H. Ritchie*).

Although this insect has a somewhat different appearance from that of any other species of *Metamasius*, it presents all the essential characters of the genus indicated by Mr. G. C. Champion (*Biol. Cent. Amer., Ins. Col. iv, pt. 7, p. 103*). It lacks the characteristic torpedo-like shape; the prothorax is broader and flatter than in the other species, the basal lobe is more pronounced, and the restriction of the basal carina is peculiar, for in all the other forms it extends almost or quite to the posterior angles; and finally, in the normal species the mentum has a shallow longitudinal impression.

Mr. Ritchie states that all the pine-apple growers are agreed that this weevil made its appearance in the district, which is one of the best pine-producing areas in the island, about four years ago, and has grown steadily worse until this year, when it is estimated that 75 per cent. of the pines have been lost. As a rule, plant pines are not attacked, and it is principally ratoon pines that are damaged, only one ratoon crop being grown. According to Mr. Ritchie's observations the plants may be attacked at various points. Sometimes the root stock is bored, or again the fruit stalk is hollowed out and collapses; a favourite place of attack is the junction of the fruit and stalk, when the grub proceeds into the fruit and riddles it, or the heart may be attacked before the pine-apple has shot above the leaves.

In addition to the black weevil Mr. Ritchie found numerous specimens of a brown weevil, *Metamasius sericeus*, Oliv., but he is of the opinion that presence of this species is merely secondary, it being attracted from the surrounding bananas by the decaying pines killed by *M. ritchiei*.